

REMARKS

Applicant's attorney is appreciative of the interview granted by the Examiner on March 31, 2011. At that interview, the differences between the invention and the references of record were discussed in detail, and proposals were made for amending the claims to better distinguish over the prior art.

Claims 1, 6 and 9 have now been amended in accordance with the discussion at the interview. In particular, the claims have been amended to recite that the user operated on-board radio station is "vehicle mounted," as was previously recited in Claim 5. In addition, the terms "relatively long" and "relatively short" were deleted, and the claims now recite that the on-board radio station has a range sufficient for communication with the network and comprises circuitry for full duplex audio and data communication with the other stations. The claims further recite that the user operated portable radio station has a shorter range than the vehicle mounted, on-board radio station.

Further, the claims recite that the user operated on-board radio station and the user operated portable radio station are capable of communication with the network independently of each other, and the on-board station further comprises programming enabling receiving messages from the portable station over a half-duplex channel when the on-board station is within range of the network the portable station is out of range of the network, storing the messages and forwarding the messages to the network over a different radio channel.

As discussed in the present specification under the Background to the Invention, it is known to place an on-board repeater in a vehicle to operate alongside an existing on-board station and to connect the hand portable to the

network through the on-board repeater. As noted, a fully compliant repeater would require two full duplex stations on-board the vehicle, and is a relatively expensive solution to the problem.

According to the invention, the on-board station, which is already capable of full duplex audio and data communications, is programmed to act, when necessary, as a store and forward receiver. Thus, the function of a separate repeater is achieved, without any additional equipment on-board the vehicle; only programming of existing equipment is required.

Claims 1, 6 and 9 have been rejected as obvious over Dinkins in view of Lee et al, while Claims 2-3, 5 and 7-9 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Dinkins in view of Lee et al and further in view of Mulford. Since a portion of Claim 5 has been incorporated into Claims 1, 6 and 9, the rejection over Dinkins in view of Lee et al and Mulford will be discussed.

Dinkins discloses a store and forward receiver which is used in combination with a subscriber unit, a remote receiver and a local base station repeater cell. When the subscriber unit is out of receiving distance from the repeater cell, the subscriber unit receives data from the store and forward receiver directly. Only one-way communication is disclosed, the subscriber unit only receiving a transmission from the store and forward receiver. The store and forward receiver does not appear to receive transmissions from the subscriber unit.

While the subscriber unit can be described as corresponding to the user operated portable radio station of the invention, there is no disclosure or suggestion of placing the store and forward unit in a vehicle, and certainly no disclosure or suggestion of programming a vehicle mounted

radio station to act as a store and forward receiver in addition to its usual function of audio and data communications.

Lee et al has been cited to show communication over what is described as being "inherently" a half-duplex channel. However, Lee et al does not relate to a radio communication system of the type presently claimed, and is directed only to an infrared data communication network for connecting personal computers and associated peripherals. This is only line-of-sight communication, and there is no suggestion of utilizing any teaching of Lee et al in a radio communication system which transmits over relatively long distances, as opposed to the communication network of Lee et al.

Mulford has been cited to show an on-board station which receives and forwards emergency messages from a portable station to a central station which the mobile station is out of range. The Mulford reference is directed to a method of activating a mobile on-board receiver when a portable is out of range of the base station. Since Mulford does utilize a mobile on-board repeater, it is thought to be closer to the invention than Dinkins and certainly closer than Lee et al, but still does not cure the defects of the primary references.

Withdrawal of these rejections is requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that the present application is now in condition for allowance. An early allowance of the application with amended claims is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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